

A S E C O N D

W A R N I N G

T O

A M E R I C A.

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Behold, he cometh with Clouds ; and every Eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him ; and all kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen.

St. JOHN.

A second WARNING to *America.*

R E V E L A T I O N S iii, 22.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

THIS book is the revelation, which God gave unto his Son, and which he sent and signified by his angel unto his servant John, in the island of Patmos, to which, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, he was banished by Domitian, which is supposed to have been about the year 96.

This book contains a wonderful vision that St. John had, which opened to him while he was in the spirit on the Lord's day: It opened with a great voice, as of a trumpet, and with a most magnificent appearance of our blessed Lord, holding seven stars in his right hand, and walking in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, which being too much for mortal eye to endure, John fell at his feet as dead; but our Lord recovered him, and bid him write the things that he revealed.

And first we have seven messengers to the seven Churches in Asia.

These epistles agree much in their general form, but in the matter of address vary according as the state of the churches varied, to whom they were inscribed; and yet often what was said to one church agreed to others.

In each epistle he, who walks amidst the gold candlesticks, assures the churches that he knows their works. Our Lord commends every church except the Laodiceans, for something he found good among them and reproveth every church, except that in Philadelphia for what he found bad among them.

By the most awful threatenings he warns the remiss; and by the most glorious promises he encourages the faithful. The wonderful titles of our Lord, in these epistles seem to agree to the particular state of the churches to which they were sent. Each epistle was directed to the angel of the church, that is, to the minister, who seems to be considered as a representative of the whole church; and yet some things in these epistles might be peculiarly applicable to the minister himself. In the close of each epistle we have the solemn injunction in our text: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.

That is, let him hear with all attention; God planted the ear for this purpose; and he that does not improve it in this manner will soon wish that he never had an ear. Let him hear what the glorious Immanuel, the prince of life saith; this is he which liveth and was dead and is alive forever more; and hath the keys of hell and death; this is also he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; let him hear what he saith; his voice is as the sound of many waters; let him hear what he saith in his providences--what he saith by his spirit in his word, and let him hear what he saith in these epistles to the seven churches in Asia; let him hear with the ear, understand with the heart, and make religion the life of his soul. But as the contents of these epistles are of general concernment to all churches to the end of the world; let him, let her, let every one that hath an ear hear what the spirit saith to the churches in the present day; what he saith by way of commendation, by way of reproof, by way of counsel, by way of threatening, and by way of encouragement to the faithful.

I. By way of commendation.

Are there any ministers, churches or private christians that have borne, that have patience, and for Christ's name sake, have laboured and have not fainted; who cannot bear them which are evil, who have tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and who hate the corrupt deeds of the Nicolaitans, and the doctrines of

Balaam ; to you he saith, I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience,

Are there any endowed with true poverty of spirit, and it may be poor in this world's goods, to you he saith, but thou art rich. Are there those who have followed Christ, where Christ and the world have parted, and so have not denied his name ; to you he saith, because thou hast kept the word of my truth, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them which dwell upon the earth.

II, Let us hear what the spirit saith to the churches in this land, by way of reproof and counsel.

If we consider our awful declensions in religion ; if we consider the righteous frowns of heaven upon us, we shall apprehend that we hear our Lord speaking to us as he did to the church of Ephesus ; I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love ; remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent, and do the first works. Let all declining christians look back and see the abatement of their former love and zeal for the glorious Immanuel ; let them compare their present state with the former, and say how much more comfortable it was with them then than now ; let them inwardly grieve and mourn before God, and go back step by step, till they have gained the ground they have lost, and do the first works again. Let them watch and pray and strive to keep their heart with all diligence, as much as they did before.

Let many protestant churches remember from whence they have fallen within a century past ; for the proof of this compare the spirit of their latter and former writings. Let particular churches in this land remember their declensions since they were first planted, and even within thirty years past, when the unclean spirit seemed, for a season, to be going out of the land ; but now he hath taken to himself seven spirits more wicked than the first, who enter in and dwell among us. Yea, let us look back to the churches in the apostles days, consider

their love, zeal and purity, and comparing our present state with theirs, let us remember how grievously we have fallen, and repent and do the first works. Then were fewer Hypocrites in the churches; professors had religion at heart; Christ dwelt among them, and additions were made to them daily of such as should be saved. Then, how holy! How humble! How meek! How patient! How prayerful! How heavenly minded were christians! But alas, even in John's time, many began to decline, as appears by our Lord's rebukes in these seven epistles. And though there have been several revivals in the church since, yet alas, how have we fallen from the primitive purity! How cold is our love to Christ and to souls! How dull our devotions! How languid our zeal! What pride, malice and hypocrisy prevail among us! While many have been careful to tithe mint, anise and cummin, we have omitted weightier matters. How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold is changed!

For these things, for our woeful and amazing security, the son of God the glorious Immanuel is grieved, and hath of late in an awful degree withdrawn his holy spirit from us, as appears---from the general decay of holy zeal in ministers and churches---from the awful abatement of spiritual life and power in the holy ordinances--and from the growing prevalency of all kinds of sin and iniquity, even under the tremendous frowns of Jehovah.

O let us remember Jerusalem; what distress and desolation came upon them for grieving away the infinitely glorious Immanuel! What sword! What sickness! What famine raged among them, till they were almost extirpated from the earth!

And verily we have had some of the same signs that preceeded their destruction. They had calls, but despised them; so have we. They were corrected, but hardened under the rod; so are we. They bit and devoured one another, making the sheckel great and the ephah small; and instead of selling that which was good, they sold

fold the refuse of their wheat ; their commodities were corrupt and adulterated ; -- added to these, they imprisoned God's Heralds.

They had also, as Josephus relates, signs in the heavens, strange appearances, and particularly a " comet that hung over Jerusalem, for a year together, in the form of a sword." And we, for more than fifty-years past, have been often warned by prodigies in the heavens, particularly that called the *aurora borealis*, or a light in the north, which has sometimes appeared exceeding awful, like streaks of blood and fire, streaming from the horizon almost or quite to the zenith : And after what philosophers say concerning the natural cause, it still remains a prodigy to all ; and is commonly said to be the fore-runner of a storm. We are still hardened, nor can it be expected that any prodigies will reform us, while we hear not Moses and the prophets. And if our sins bring on us distress similar to that on the Jews, then no marvel that we see the same signs preceeding it.

But before the decree be gone forth ; before the glory of the Lord, to make his final departure, go up from the midst of us, let us repent and earnestly beseech Immanuel to return and dwell among us. Then should we see happy days again, as we have seen before.

III. Let us hear what the spirit saith to the churches in this land, by way of threatening.

He, who is the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass as if they did burn in a furnace, whose voice is as the sound of many waters, and out of whose mouth proceedeth a sharp two edged sword ; he speaks to the church in this land, in accents louder than thunder ; he says, repent, or I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place. That is, I will unchurch you, ye shall have no ministers nor ordinances, and the places of worship ye resorted to, shall enjoy their silent sabbath ; and this he threatens to do quickly.

Again he says, repent, or else I will come unto thee
quickly

quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth ; that is I will pronounce terrible woes against thee, and will execute all the threatenings in my word upon thee, except thou repent.

Again he says, because thou art luke warm, and art neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Now remember these Asian churches: They, and many others, have long since felt the frowns of the Lamb. But perhaps some will be ready to say, ah! Immanuel is bent on our ruin ; he would destroy us of choice. But no, judgment is his strange work ; he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men ; he hath sworn by an oath, as I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. And as he said to the church in Laodicea, he says to his corrupt church in this land : As many as I love I rebuke and chasten ; be zealous therefore and repent.

Notwithstanding we have most shamefully left our first love ; notwithstanding the blasphemy of some, the corruption of many, the luke-warmness of most, yet he, the glorious Immanuel, is now drawing near and waiting for our return.

He says, behold I stand at the door and knock ; If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. O how gentle ! How winning ! How condescending ! How amazing this ! Verily he must be deafer than a stone, and his heart harder than adamant, who is not moved with it. Again, and for encouragement, he saith, to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. That is, they shall partake of the full joy of heaven above ; and as the tree of life is in Eden would have been to Adam a sacrament of confirmation, in case he had stood till the end of his trial, so they, in the more glorious paradise above, shall forever enjoy the surest pledges of their confirmation in eternal bliss.

Not let any say, because we are out of the church,

the spirit saith nothing to us. Whether you are in the church or out of it, if you are ungodly there is a portion for you in the sacred word.

A D D R E S S E S.

1. *To profane Swearers and Cursers.*

MY FRIENDS.

If any thing can make black---it is not so much the colour of the skin as the foulness of the tongue and the blackness of the heart. I must tell you in the name of him who hath the sharp sword with two edges, and at his pleasure makes it vibrate like lightning through his enemies, unless you repent, you are dead men; nay, damn'd men, damn'd forever. If you ask the import of these words, which I fear some have as little idea of as a blind man of colours, I answer, eternity can give their awful import! But this I say, all the tremendous judgments upon the old world---upon Sodom---upon Egypt---upon Dathan and Abiram---upon the camp of the Assyrians, and upon the Jews in their final destruction, all these and ten thousand more are but the hidings of that power which you, feeble worms of the dust, impiously rear your heads to defy.

But, sirs, remember, after all your defiance which you say are in jest, you will soon find that the glorious Judge is not in jest, when he shall say, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels!*---As he loved cursing so let it come unto him,---into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Psa. cix. 17, 18. Let the wise secure the favour of the eternal Judge, while it is tendered in the free offers of the gospel.

2. *To the GOSPEL PROFESSOR.*

S I R,

Thou professest more than others; suffer me to propose the question, What doest thou more than others? Mat. v. 47.

I am

I answer, if you have such a sense of your own vileness, of the laws purity, of the evil of sin, of Christ's excellence, of God's glory, of the beauty of holiness, of this world's emptiness, of eternity's fullness, of heaven's joys, as excite you to admire and adore the incomprehensibleness of the great Jehovah, and as it were to annihilate yourself at his feet, and if these views amidst your trials beget in you a life of faith, of holy humble walk with God, looking to Jesus Christ for grace to enable you to repent, to believe, to love God, to forgive your enemies, and even to think a right thought, and at the same time not trusting to your good aims, but to the merits of Christ only for the acceptance of your person and services with God, then you do more than others. And if you go on striving to apprehend that for which Christ apprehended you in your effectual calling, your reward will be greater; for he saith, in Revelations ii. 17. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.

3. To the generality of the Churches in NEW-ENGLAND.

Brethren and Fathers,

Church power is a subject on which a world of books have been wrote, and seas of blood have been already spilt.—I would humbly offer a few remarks.

In the time of the Apostles a christian church consisted of the people, their leaders and deacons; and every church had authority to govern itself according to the word of God, and was subject, as a church, to the controul of no power under Christ. Hence St. Paul bids the church of Corinth to put away from among themselves that wicked person. See 1 Cor. v. 13

They had the power of excommunication in themselves; and it seems that even the apostles did not proceed in matters of importance without the consent of the brotherhood, as in Acts xv. 22—3. Then pleased it

it the Apostles and Elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch. See also Acts i. 15 to the end—and Acts vi. 3. And while love like the spirit in the living creatures animated the Apostles, Elders and Brethren, they each went straight forward. Then they were strong; nor did they apprehend any need of leaning upon others.

But some time after their love and zeal were abated, all authority was resigned to the ecclesiasticks, and the Pope tyrannised with dreadful sway; and now the Church groaned under bondage in Babylon for several ages. Thus, what the Lord Christ gave to his churches, to use for their peace and edification, they tamely resigned, and the Pope proudly assumed. But the reformation led the Church partly out of this bondage: The Protestants have recovered this power out of the hands of the Pope. The Episcopalians lodged it in the hands of Bishops: But the Presbyterians went further; they retrieved the power out of the hands of the Pope and lodged it in the hands of the Clergy and a number of Elders chosen out of the Brotherhood to assist in governing. In this stage of the Reformation they did much better than in the former.

But after this, the Dissenters in England retrieved the authority from the Bishops solely, and acknowledged it to be in the hands of the church officers, and of every private brother, and that none under Christ should controul them.

Thus, after long antichristian tyranny, the power came home again to the church, and was lodged nearer where Christ left it than it had been for many ages before. This Authority went out in the decrease of love, and in the increase of love it returned.

But, O New-England churches! you have gone backward and not forward; you have abated of your love, zeal and fervency in religion, and instead of leaning upon the Lord Christ, as once, calling no man father upon earth, you trust in an arm of flesh. Instead of going to God for light and strength to judge and determine

mine your own matters, we go to councils, and commit Christ, his cause, or his people into their hands. This privilege, the Church's power, is not to be sold as Esau sold his birthright.

Our pious forefathers contended warmly for it in Old England;—the Lord Christ gave it them, and sent them over to this land that they might enjoy it without molestation; and now will you bury the talent which you once prayed so earnestly you might possess, will you bury it in the hands of councils, and then say to the Lord, Lo, there thou hast that is thine? Hear what the Lord saith, Thou wicked and slothful servant—Take the talent from him and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

O New-England Churches, your crime in going backward, after such marvellous deliverances, is much greater than if you had never come thus far. Israel were about to return to Egypt; and you have really made progress in going back to what you once disavowed and exclaimed against. Now, repent and turn again speedily to the Lord; return in the way of love, faith, and a holy zeal—and then light, courage and strength will return to you. Then you will have less inclination to commit this sacred right to councils, and they will less desire it; and I believe that such a reformation is as laudable as it was for the Jews to return from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem. This would embolden you to look to God for that protection in an approaching storm which he afforded to our forefathers. Would you enjoy their blessing, then prove yourselves their children by following them as they followed Christ and his primitive churches.

Fear not losing temporalities in this day. When a ship is overloaded in a storm, it is better to throw out the cargo than to sink with it. Nay, let us fear not them that mock, and rail, and call hard names, and that may kill the body; but let us rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell forever. Now blessed are they, who maintaining the furthest progress

progress in the reformation, go forward and not backwards, making due allowances for the change of place and circumstances.

And you who are so wise as to keep the word of Christ's patience, he will keep from the hour of temptation, which will come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Revel. iii. 10. Now I believe that they who conduct nearest to the above line best deserve the name of christians of any in New England. And neither would I profess to be Presbyterian, or a Congregationalist, or any other name, but by the grace of God to be a Christian. This is the line which recommends itself, which the state of New-England pleads for, and which the churches in the days of the apostles followed.

4. To the whole LAND.

My Countrymen and Brethren,

I beseech you, for the Lord's sake, put away the Negro slavery; abhor all jesting with God's holy word; submit to the glorious Immanuel, and let us honor him that we may be happy in his favour.

E-feld, September, 12, 1777.

T H E E N D.

